

NCPN Cooperative Agreement Program Request for Applications (RFA) – FY 2011

Synopsis for a Funding Opportunity

National Clean Plant Network (NCPN)

Funding Type: Cooperative Agreement¹

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Funding Opportunity Title: National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) Cooperative Agreements Program

Applications Due Date: Applications must be received by June 10, 2011

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

10.025, Plant and Animal Disease, Pest Control, and Animal Care

Eligible Applicants:

Land-Grant Universities
Non Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture
State or Local Governments
Federal Agencies

Cost Sharing: Applications that indicate a cost share, match, or an enumeration of other funds available for program operations in addition to NCPN requested support shall be accorded increased prioritization for NCPN funding.

Funding Opportunity Description: This program continues funding for FY 2011 as provided under the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (commonly called the Farm Bill of 2008) Section 10202; the National Clean Plant Network.

¹ An Interagency Agreement may be used in the event that a successful applicant is a Federal agency.

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The National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) provides high quality asexually propagated plant material free of targeted plant pathogens and pests that cause economic loss to protect the environment and ensure the global competitiveness of specialty crop producers.

Priorities for this program include: 1) establishing and supporting clean plant network governance and related administrative and support systems; 2) providing for operations needed for the rapid and safe introduction, diagnosis, treatment, foundation block establishment and release of clean plant materials for planting from foreign and domestic sources for commercial development; 3) conducting methods development to accurately test, develop therapies, and support the establishment of guidelines and standards for different crop species for certification maintenance; 4) developing partnerships with land-grant and other university-based extension and state departments of agriculture and outreach services to interact with commercial nurseries, industry associations and producers; and 5) developing and implementing audit and quality controls.

Funding will be provided to Land-Grant Universities, Non Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture, State Agricultural Experiment Stations, State Governments, and Federal Agencies (to the extent that support to Federal clean plant centers is suggested by industry stakeholders) to support implementation and ongoing activities of the National Clean Plant Network. Applications for cooperative agreement funding are given priority if they are based on specialty crop specific, coordinated plans for developing and maintaining a comprehensive, cohesive and efficient network.

Date to Post this Synopsis on the Grants.gov website: May 2, 2011



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Full Announcement

National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) Request for Applications

**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ)**

Funding Opportunity Title: National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) Cooperative Agreements Program

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: _____

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 10.025, Plant and Animal Disease, Pest Control, and Animal Care

Key Dates: Applications must be received by June 10, 2011.
Cooperative Agreements are anticipated to begin about August 15, 2011

Funding Description: Funding Opportunity Description: This program implements funding for FY 2011 as provided under the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (commonly called the Farm Bill of 2008) Section 10202; the National Clean Plant Network.

The National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) provides high quality, asexually propagated plant material free of targeted plant pathogens and pests that cause economic loss to protect the environment and ensure the global competitiveness of specialty crop producers.

Priorities for this program include: 1) establishing and supporting clean plant network governance and related administrative and support systems; 2) providing for operations needed for the rapid and safe introduction, diagnosis, treatment, foundation block establishment and release of clean plant materials for planting from foreign and domestic sources for commercial development; 3) conducting methods development to accurately test, develop therapies, and support the establishment of guidelines and standards for different crop species for certification maintenance; 4) developing partnerships with land-grant and other university-based extension and outreach services to interact with commercial nurseries, industry associations, and producers; and 5) developing and implementing audit and quality controls.

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Funding will be provided to Land-Grant Universities, Non Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture, State Agricultural Experiment Stations, State Governments, and Federal agencies to support implementation and ongoing activities of the NCPN. Applications for cooperative agreement funding are given priority if they are based on specialty crop specific, coordinated plans for developing and maintaining a comprehensive, cohesive, and efficient network.

Total Amount to be Awarded: Anticipated at about \$4,500,000.

Projects to be Awarded: Approximately 10 Cooperative Agreements.

Eligibility: Land-Grant Universities, Non-Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture, State Agricultural Experiment Stations, State Governments, and Federal Agencies (to the extent that support to Federal clean plant centers is suggested by industry stakeholders).

Cost Sharing: Cost sharing is not required, but preferred. NCPN funding recipients are expected to demonstrate stakeholder or other contributions to clean plant efforts. Applications that indicate an enumeration of other funds available for program clean plant operations in addition to NCPN requested support shall be accorded increased prioritization for NCPN funding. This may include cost sharing or matching as well as other contributions to the applicant for clean plant activities such as revenue from the sales of plant materials and services, collection of fees or royalties, grants or gifts to the applicant with contribute to the NCPN mission, or matches such as the quantifiable commitment of faculty or staff time, and quantifiable development of facilities and land for use in clean plant activities. It is the sense of the National Clean Plant Network that cooperator self-sufficiency is an important aspect of a healthy network and that program cost-sharing, matching or an indication of other resources being directly applied to clean plant program operations is one good measure of self-sufficiency.

Application and Submission: An Applicant may submit only one application and/or be a third party in an application submitted by another entity. If an Applicant is a member of or covered by more than one NCPN specialty crop governing body (specialty crop clean plant network) and applying for support for activities on specialty crops covered by more than one network, a single application should be submitted to cover the expense of all clean plant activity.

Applicants can apply through the Grants.gov website. Federal agencies applying for NCPN support should submit only the work plan and budget plan to the address on page 31.



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Part I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. NCPN Background, Mission, and Vision

Background

In May 2008, H.R. 6124 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, otherwise known as the Farm Bill of 2008, became law. The National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) was included in The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) Title X, Sec 10202. Beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, it authorizes funding of \$20 million over 4 years (FY 2009-2012) to establish the NCPN for specialty crops to provide reliable sources of propagative material that are free of propagative-borne pathogens. Many perennial specialty crops are potentially included in this initiative. This provision would establish a network of clean plant centers in the United States that would conduct diagnostic and pathogen elimination services and to establish foundation blocks (nuclear stock) to provide pathogen-tested plant materials to nurseries, growers and to state certification programs. This effort coincides with a desire by industry and Federal and state regulatory agencies to create a system of voluntary compliance to ensure that pests and diseases that can originate in, and be distributed by, the nursery industry are detected and eliminated before they become widespread.

Mission

The NCPN provides high quality, asexually propagated plant material free of targeted plant pathogens and pests that cause economic loss to protect the environment and ensure the global competitiveness of specialty crop producers.

Vision

The NCPN's regional centers of excellence are recognized leaders in the introduction of the highest quality, regionally adapted, true-to-type propagative plant materials that are free of targeted plant pathogens and pests, thus promoting a vigorous commercial environment and the opportunity for international trade while protecting the environment of North America. Translational research, education and extension initiatives are supported to maintain the network's high quality collections and strengthen its services. Industry, research and regulatory communities collaborate to ensure an abundant supply of healthy specialty crops. The economic, environmental and social sustainability of specialty crop industries and the improved economies of the communities that depend on these industries are the ultimate impacts of the NCPN's robust service delivery.

B. USDA Approach to the National Clean Plant Network

USDA's goal is to create an effective, uniform, consistent, efficient, and ultimately self-sustaining network of clean plant centers serving the needs of specialty crop industry. We believe this goal can be achieved by adhering to several key objectives.

- First, projects generally given priority by the NCPN are coordinated and harmonized by stakeholder-organized and driven specialty crop governing bodies composed of clean plant centers, universities, industry representatives and government officials. These bodies meet regularly including meetings with the NCPN National Governing Board, have elected members, and operate under a charter. These bodies help the NCPN establish priorities and harmonize proposals.
- Second, considerable weight is accorded applications submitted through specialty crop clean plant network governing bodies that engage in an industry-driven pre-proposal review process that explains the relevance of each proposal to that network's needs and further harmonizes and prioritizes components of pre-proposals submitted to them for rank importance to the network, especially if funding is limited. Additionally, each such application is encouraged to include information in the form of an addendum indicating how its program fits and adds value to its respective specialty crop network and how it fits into the needs of the network relative to other clean plant centers working on the same specialty crop. This addendum should also be developed jointly with other clean plant centers seeking NCPN support for work with the same specialty crop.
- Third, priority is given to existing clean plant centers that become part of the NCPN and conduct diagnostics and therapy on select publically available clones of specialty crops requested by industry. Additionally, support is provided for the establishment and maintenance of this material in foundation/nuclear blocks.
- Fourth, plant material proposed for testing and therapy may be imported from foreign sources, submitted from existing domestic germplasm collections, or submitted to the network because it is known to be infected with a pathogen of concern.
- Fifth, the NCPN supports the development of methods and technologies needed to support clean plant activities for diagnostics and therapy including equipment needed to support these activities as appropriate.
- Sixth, NCPN is outcome-oriented and all projects requesting support must develop performance benchmarks, timelines and indicate associated deliverables and the impact of those products on industry.
- Seventh, NCPN sees the long-term value in supporting economic studies that strive to help stakeholders better understand the impact of clean plants on NCPN-supported specialty crop industries.
- Eighth, NCPN encourages applicants for funding to seek and secure program funding and income generating opportunities in addition to those funds requested from NCPN. Applications that indicate a cost share, match, or an enumeration of other funds

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available for program operations in addition to NCPN requested support shall be accorded increased prioritization for NCPN funding.

- Ninth, NCPN recognizes the importance of well coordinated and targeted extension, outreach and education materials and activities needed to link the NCPN program concept, the clean plant centers, and their products with the ultimate recipients, especially, commercial nurseries and growers. The primary objective is to ensure that the industries are aware of the importance of promoting and using clean plant material, and of the purpose, products and services of the NCPN including its constituent cooperating centers. Under this ‘Request for Applications’ (RFA) consideration is given to support the planning and development of education/outreach concepts and products being coordinated, proposed, and advanced under the banner of the NCPN Education/Outreach Working Group. Information about the priorities established by this working group can be had by contacting the leadership in any of the existing NCPN specialty crop governing bodies or by contacting USDA’s NCPN Coordinator as provided for elsewhere in this RFA.

USDA plans to continue with implementation of the NCPN Cooperative Agreements Program in FY 2011. Because funding is limited, first priority shall be given to the support of existing facilities with an established history of clean plant performance capable of conducting diagnostics, therapeutics and establishing foundation blocks with the intent of making clean plant material available to industry for immediate increase for crop production. Priority shall also be given to specialty crops that organize under the banner of the NCPN into appropriate governing bodies to network, coordinate, prioritize and harmonize their respective projects and associated needs and deliverables.

Because each project is intended to have significant input and involvement of Federal, State and other stakeholders, the instrument used for this program shall be the Cooperative Agreement.

Funds allocated through the Farm Bill of 2008 will be used to fund the projects in FY 2009-2012. The funds are no-year, but they shall generally be available for only one year’s needs subject to the decision of the NCPN Core Working Group and the NCPN Governing Board. It is recognized that current funds may not be sufficient to fully support each project. Consequently, cost sharing is encouraged. Additionally, NCPN may recommend program and funding modifications as appropriate, and may chose to offer funding for programs at less than the requested amount. Projects of merit, not funded through current funds, may be considered in the next fiscal year (FY 2012) as funding is available. Although NCPN funding as authorized in the Farm Bill of 2008 is mandatory, successful applicants for FY 2011 funds may be requested and approved to use their FY 2011 funds for more than a single year as determined by the NCPN Governing Board and as further supported by USDA.

Cooperative Agreements will each support organizational activities, administration, operations, and other associated activities of the NCPN and associated specialty crops.

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C. Alignment with the USDA Strategic Goals and Mission Areas:

Applicants are required to indicate which of the USDA or NCPN mission areas or goals are being addressed by activities proposed in their application for NCPN Cooperative Agreements program funding. Applicants may indicate more than one mission area or goal is being satisfied. Additionally, all successful applicants must indicate and show in their application that at least one (1) NCPN goal is being satisfied.

In all cases, applicants must provide a brief explanatory statement regarding how they are satisfying any indicated USDA, Agency, or NCPN Goal or Mission Area.

USDA Departmental Priorities, Actions, and Secretarial Initiatives:

USDA Priority ‘Pest Management’ – Minimize and prevent damage to the U.S. food supply caused by plant and animal pests and diseases

Key NCPN Program Efforts to Support the Priority

- ☒ 1.1 - Protecting agricultural health by minimizing major diseases and pests to ensure access to safe, nutritious, and plentiful food
- ☒ 1.2 - Enhance America’s ability to develop and trade agricultural products derived from new technologies
- ☒ 1.3 - Expand research to increase the adaptation of sustainable agricultural systems to farmer/rancher and ecosystem needs
- ☒ 1.4 - Increase the competitiveness of American agricultural exports; maintaining a strong agricultural safety net; modernizing the farm program delivery system; and ensuring fair and competitive agricultural markets

USDA Priority ‘Rural Community Support’ – Support rural communities and the public, and promote and enforce animal welfare

Key NCPN Program Efforts to Support the Priority

- ☒ 2.1 - Increasing access to broadband and continuous business creation
- ☒ 2.2 - Increase the prosperity of rural communities by strategically investing in regional innovation
- ☒ 2.3 - Increase the competitiveness of American agricultural exports

Additional Alignment – USDA Management Initiatives

Key Alignments met by this Program (NCPN)

- ☒ Management Initiative #3 – Coordinate outreach and improve consultation and collaboration efforts to increase access to USDA programs and services
- ☒ Management Initiative #6 – Optimize USDA “green” or sustainable operations

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USDA Secretarial Initiatives:

- Small/Mid-Sized Producers - Pursue programs that provide benefits to small or mid-sized producers and distributors.

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Mission and Organizational Priorities: *(Source – USDA/APHIS Strategic Plan FY 2007-2012)*

APHIS Mission Priority 1 – *Strengthen our Safeguarding System Domestically and in Other Countries*

Key Supporting Initiative 1 - Laboratory Networks – Integration of Federal, State, University and other diagnostic resources to support surveillance and detection efforts.

APHIS Mission Priority 3 – *Facilitate Safe Agricultural Trade through Effective Management of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Issues*

Key Supporting Initiative 1 – International Standard Setting – Building sets of practical, science-based global standards to manage SPS issues.

USDA, APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Mission, Goals, Objectives, and Strategies:

PPQ Crosscutting Goals and Objectives:

PPQ Crosscutting Goal 1: *Strengthen PPQ's Outreach & Communication with traditional & non-traditional stakeholders (Non-Governmental Organizations & Industry) including the general public.*

Objectives:

- 1.1 - Educate and raise the public's general awareness of invasive species issues, communicating a clear and precise message through multiple communication modalities & channels.
- 1.5 - Ensure the communication process includes an effective mechanism to listen and take into account stakeholder and the public's interests and concerns.
- 1.6 - Strengthen NGO and industry engagement and early involvement in PPQ's mission related activities.

PPQ Crosscutting Goal 2: *Expand and build partnerships and coalitions with PPQ's traditional and non-traditional State, Tribal, Federal and international partners* in carrying out the PPQ mission.*

Objectives:

- 2.4 - Build and strengthen strategic alliances among the Federal agencies responsible for responding to new pest outbreaks.

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PPQ Crosscutting Goal 3: *Enhance PPQ's Science and Technology foundation, including social science to fully support PPQ's policy and regulatory decision making and operations and to maintain PPQ's international leadership in plant health issues*

Objectives:

- 3.1 - Ensure the best available scientific tools are provided in a timely basis to support emergency and domestic program operations while maintaining a focus on emerging technological innovations for future use.

PPQ Strategic Program Goals, Objectives, and Actionable Strategies:

Additionally, the National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) meets Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Strategies as indicated above by addressing components of the PPQ Strategic Plan FY 2010-2015 as indicated here:

PPQ Overarching Goal #1 – Strengthening Outreach

Objective 1.1 – Systematically Engage Stakeholders in Decision-Making and Consensus Building

- ☒ Actionable Strategy 1. Identify affected or at-risk areas to target efforts to systematically engage citizens in public decision-making and consensus-building forums in an effort to educate the public about pest issues and seek public and stakeholder input when developing regulatory policy and program delivery strategies.

Objective 1.3 - Public Awareness Campaigns to increase likelihood that the public will adopt behaviors to help mitigate the introduction and spread of exotic pests and diseases

- ☒ Actionable Strategy 2. Expand the use of strategies in the Web 2.0 environment to engage the public and key stakeholders..
- ☒ Actionable Strategy 4. Ensure the communications process includes an effective mechanism to listen and take into account stakeholder and the public's interest and concerns.
- ☒ Actionable Strategy 5. Ensure the agency's outreach efforts effectively connect American agriculture and the relevance of the agency's mission to consumers.

PPQ Overarching Goal #2 – Expand and Build Partnerships

Objective 2.2 – Expand and strengthen the network and activities.

- ☒ Actionable Strategy 1. Pursue the formation of multi-agency working groups to combine resources to accomplish tasks of mutual concern.
- ☒ Actionable Strategy 3. Encourage sharing of information networks at all levels of the organization, including the messages being shared with external partners.

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- ☒ Actionable Strategy 7. Look for opportunities to establish cooperative agreements to accomplish tasks.

Objective 2.3 – Build and strengthen strategic alliances among the federal agencies responsible for responding to new pest outbreaks.

- ☒ Actionable Strategy 6. Identify and build relationships with other federal agencies working on specific pest issues.

PPQ Overarching Goal #3 – Enhance PPQ’s Science and Technology Foundation

Objective 3.1 – Provide the best science and technology to support long-term, sustainable agricultural systems

- ☒ Actionable Strategy 2. Establish commodity-based coordinating groups to conduct/coordinate research and industry efforts.

Objective 3.2 – Position PPQ as a leader in international phytosanitary policy setting

- ☒ Actionable Strategy 3. Increase and coordinate targeted research with international partners for methods development and validation activities including treatment and diagnostics development.

PPQ Strategic Program Goal #1 – Optimize the effectiveness of PPQ’s Pest Exclusion / Prevention activities

Objective 1.1 – Address the pest risks associated with the importation of agricultural commodities, plants for planting and research materials

- ☒ Actionable Strategy 8. Encourage / incentivize the use of more environmentally friendly methodologies to mitigate pest risks.

Objective 1.2 – Ensure that pest exclusion/prevention activities address the highest risk pathways

- ☒ Actionable Strategy 1. Develop strategies to address the pest risk associated with high-risk pathways.

Objective 1.5 – Ensure competitiveness of specialty crop and small producers in the global marketplace

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- ☑ Actionable Strategy 1. Provide high quality asexually propagated plant material free of targeted plant pests through programs including the NCPN and secure ongoing funding mechanisms beyond the Farm Bill funding.
- ☑ Actionable Strategy 2. Work to overcome phytosanitary barriers to increase agricultural exports in support of rural economies.
- ☑ Actionable Strategy 3. Develop and harmonize audit-based certification programs including the harmonization of different certification programs, audit and inspection training for cooperators.
- ☑ Actionable Strategy 4. Develop science-based best management practices and risk mitigation practices to exclude, contain and control regulated pests from the nursery production chain.

PPQ Strategic Program Goal #2 – Enhance PPQ’s capacity to detect the presence of new exotic plant health pest threats as early as possible so that an appropriate and timely response can be launched

Objective 2.1 – Enhance plant pest/disease data collection and analysis to deploy resources efficiently to detect pests as early as possible

- ☑ Actionable Strategy 1. Identify and target high risk pathways.

Objective 2.3 – Strengthen survey procedures and tools to improve PPQ’s capacity to rapidly detect and accurately identify pests of regulatory significance

- ☑ Actionable Strategy 2. Enhance pest screening expertise and taxonomic capacity.
- ☑ Actionable Strategy 3. Increase the deployment of molecular diagnostic tools.

PPQ Strategic Program Goal #3 – Enhance PPQ’s capacity to strategically prepare for, respond to, and recover from plant health emergencies

Objective 3.1 – Ensure emergency preparedness planning and activities are strategically targeted and proactively implemented.

- ☑ Actionable Strategy 4. Develop an organizational practice for building coalitions to engage in the delivery of plant health emergency and domestic programs.

Objective 3.3 – Ensure sound long term sustainable strategies are incorporated into crop production practices in the recovery phase of a plant health emergency

- ☑ Actionable Strategy 1. Work with industry to develop and implement models for managing and integrating systems approaches to ensure long term sustainability for crops.
- ☑ Actionable Strategy 2. Work with industry, states, and tribes to identify sustainable production practices.

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PPQ Strategic Program Goal #4 – Ensure PPQ’s portfolio of programs is the most effective, efficient, strategic and relevant in the face of emerging and ongoing exotic pest threats and the impacts from changing climate

Objective 4.1 – Ensure PPQ programs are routinely evaluated

- ☒ Actionable Strategy 4. Actively engage a broad range of stakeholders early on in the process of evaluating programs to get their input regarding the future of a domestic program.

Objective 4.3 – Ensure that realistic final outcomes are clearly defined

- ☒ Actionable Strategy 4. Collaborate with stakeholders in gathering input to establish realistic outcomes for new programs and future direction once these outcomes are achieved.

D. Alignment with NCPN Program Components

The following components of the NCPN are the focus of the FY 2011 NCPN Cooperative Agreements program. Applications must reflect which of the focus areas are being serviced and how they are being accomplished.

1. Governance and structure
 - 1.1. Support activities directly related to the work of the Governing Board for NCPN.
 - 1.2. Develop and implement a specialty crop-based management and governance structure through national governing bodies.
 - 1.3. Establish and maintain NCPN-related websites and databases.
 - 1.4. Organize, hold, or participate in NCPN or related meetings in support of the network.
 - 1.5. Develop administrative and record keeping assets, methods and service that will ensure the security, continuity and accuracy of NCPN activities, products and services.
2. Operations
 - 2.1 Establish, maintain and enhance a network of facilities and expertise for testing and providing therapy for publically available clones of specialty crops based on climatic suitability, current infrastructure and expertise, regional needs and disease safety standards, including the establishment and maintenance of foundation/nuclear blocks.
 - 2.2 Maintain collections in accordance with standards supported by NCPN.
 - 2.3 Provide foundation stock to industry, being encouraged to do so within prescribed state and federal certification schemes.

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3. Methods Development
 - 3.1. Develop rapid, accurate testing techniques to assess plant material status and to meet the needs of regulators and the industry.
 - 3.2. Develop therapeutic methods for infected materials for effective and rapid elimination of pathogens from specialty crops for planting.
 - 3.3. Establish diagnostic guidelines and standards for different specialty crop species for certification maintenance.
4. Extension, Outreach, and Education
 - 4.1. Develop NCPN education, outreach, and education materials.
5. Quality Assurance and Quality Control
 - 5.1. Develop performance benchmarks and schedules of product deliverables and establish and implement plans for internal programs reviews and quality controls.

E. Program Criteria

In order to submit an application to the NCPN Cooperative Agreements Program, an applicant must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria.

1. Specialty Crops:

- Program Focus – Any commodity proposed as a target for NCPN program funding must qualify as a ‘specialty crop’ as defined by the USDA (for the definition, see Section 3 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004; 7 U.S.C. 1621 note; Public Law 108-465)
- Publically Available Material – Plant material supported by NCPN funding must be material in the public domain.

2. Program Pest Management Focus:

- Program Operations - NCPN funding is limited to programs that diagnose and treat against vegetatively-propagated, graft-transmissible plant pathogens, and establish ‘clean plant’ foundation/nuclear plantings, including those maintained by governments, land grant universities, or non land-grant colleges of agriculture.
- Foundation Blocks – NCPN funds may only be used to diagnose and treat specialty crop plant material intended for initial inclusion in Federal, State, or university-based foundation collections, clonal repositories, or at nurseries enrolled with government or universities in formal nursery research and conservation programs.
- Program Governance, Research, Education, and Economics - Activities may also include forming and managing clean plant governing bodies, conducting clean plant research and methods development, developing clean plant extension, outreach and education materials and associated programs, and pursuing economic studies of NCPN and its impacts on industry.

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3. Eligible Applicants:

- Eligibility Requirement – Eligible applicants must be state government agencies, land grant universities, State Agricultural Experiment Stations, non-land grant colleges of agriculture, or Federal Government agencies.

4. Regulatory Requirements:

- Permits and Inspections – Eligible applicants intending to handle potentially infected plant materials shall possess the necessary Federal authorizations and inspections needed to safely possess, handle, maintain, and dispose of materials appropriately.

5. Meeting Program Goals:

- NCPN Goals – Application proposals must clearly meet one or more each of both the stipulated USDA goals and the NCPN program goals as defined in this Request for Applications (RFA).

F. Program Priorities

In addition to the Program Criteria stated above, following are priorities that NCPN will consider in reviewing applications for funding and in implementing its Cooperative Agreements program. These Program Priorities shall be used by NCPN in its FY 2011 Request for Applications program to help ensure high quality standard in submitted applications.

1. Quarantine Crops:

- Highly Restricted Crops – Priority is given to applications supporting work on specialty crops that, if they were to be imported from foreign sources, would be considered as being restricted in importation unless initially processed through a clean plant center capable of handling potentially infected plant materials, and submitting this material to plant pathogen diagnostics and therapy. This does not preclude similar plant varieties from being submitted from domestic sources such as germplasm collections.

2. Specialty Crops in State Certification Programs:

- Nursery Clean Plant Support – Priority is given to the diagnostics and therapy for specialty crops where there is expressed interest from state governments to support state certification programs for nurseries or a reasonable possibility in the building of national certification standards.

3. Propagatively Transmitted Pathogens:

- Vegetative Propagation - NCPN program funding primarily targets propagatively-transmitted plant pathogens (graft-transmissible plant pathogens) found in specialty crops that are vegetatively propagated.

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4. Existing Facilities:

- Governmental and University – Priority is given to existing governmental or university facilities experienced in appropriate facets of specialty crop pathogen clean plant activities with a demonstrated capacity to develop, manage, and distribute specialty crop clean plant material.

5. Established or Forming Clean Plant Network Tier 2 Governing Bodies:

- Applicant Proposal Support from Established NCPN Clean Plant Governing Bodies – Priority is given to applications that are coordinated through NCPN-sponsored, specialty crop-specific clean plant network governing bodies within Tier 2 groups. This includes a process of having the application pre-reviewed by the appropriate governing body for networking, prioritization, harmonization, and coordination with other proposals submitted covering the same NCPN specialty crop grouping. Evidence of such coordination is required at least in the form of a letter of support from the appropriate NCPN governing body specific to the applicant's specialty crop focus area.
- Pre-Proposal Review Process – Pre-proposals that are reviewed by designated governing body working groups that specifically target proposal harmonization and prioritization of proposal components for funding shall be given high priority. Such working groups should be at least 50% composed of affected industry members.
- Governing Bodies in Formation - In cases where a specialty crop does not yet have an NCPN recognized governing body, but where one is being formed, evidence of network formation activities may be submitted.

6. Multiple Cooperators:

- Cooperator Networking – Priority is given to applications that show clear program and funding coordination among two or more entities, networking, and involvement of other cooperators, including industry partners, universities, and governmental cooperators.

7. Meeting Industry Goals:

- Clean Plant Industry Goals – Preference is given to applications that meet one or more industry group-established priorities covering clean plant programs as expressed by industry members participating in NCPN specialty crop governing bodies. Details are available by contacting the leadership of respective specialty crop governing bodies. Evidence of meeting industry goals is suggested in the form of specialty crop governing bodies establishing and utilizing a pre-proposal review group that is driven by industry representation of about 50% membership.

8. Education/Extension/Outreach:

- Education Products and Materials - Consideration may be given to applications that include working through the NCPN Education/Outreach Working Group to develop concepts and products for NCPN extension, education and outreach with stakeholders, especially nurseries and growers. Stakeholder education should focus on informing stakeholders in the value of using clean plants and on

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orienting around NCPN program products and should show coordination of product or process with the NCPN Education/Outreach Working Group

9. Economic Studies:

- Cost/Benefit Analyses and Other Related Work – Consideration may be given to applications requesting support to look at the economic impacts, costs, and benefits of developing and using clean plant material, especially with regard to such impacts on industry.

10. Cost Sharing:

- Other Funding – Preference may be given to applicants that contribute and document in their application funds or other resources that they intend to use as a cost share, matching funds, in-kind contributions or enumeration of other funds being used to support clean plant activities. Applications that indicate a cost share, match, or an enumeration of other funds available for program operations in addition to NCPN requested support shall be accorded increased prioritization for NCPN funding.

11. Program Self-Sufficiency:

- Resource Independence – Preference may be given to applicants that indicate or otherwise show that, over time, they are working towards becoming increasingly self-sufficient and being able to operate their clean plant program with decreasing or minimal continued Federal financial support.

12. Benefits to Small Producers and Distributors

- Small to Mid-Sized, Local Agricultural Industries – Preference may be given to applicants that demonstrate how their proposal and associated products and deliverable make a positive impact on small to mid-sized, local agricultural industries.

G. Program Activities for which NCPN Funding is Not Allowed

The NCPN Cooperative Agreements program shall not provide assistance for:

- Construction
- The Development of State Nursery Certification Programs
- DNA Fingerprinting (Note: NCPN recognizes the importance of maintaining and verifying clonal plant identity, however, DNA fingerprinting efforts will not be supported in this RFA)
- Basic Research; though funding may be used for applied research/methods development when the outcome impacts immediate delivery of clean plants to users.

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H. Program Merits

The project Application should offer merit relative to the implementation of the NCPN in several ways, including, but not limited to the points explained below.

- Determine and demonstrate practical relevance of the project to actual deliverables needed by nurseries and growers, especially regarding their need for rapid access to safe, clean plant material.
- Show adherence to the goals and priorities established by the NCPN and its stakeholders at the time of the Application.
- Have been pre-reviewed and considered by the appropriate specialty crop clean plant network governing body for network relevance, coordination, prioritization, and harmonization. The Application should also indicate how the project is harmonized with others in the respective network and its relevance to advancing the interests of the network specifically and the NCPN in general.
- If an NCPN-focused specialty crop governing body is not yet formed, indicate what measures the Applicant plans to take, or the measures already being undertaken by others to help form such a body, including potential cooperators.
- Identify the issues or obstacles that are going to be addressed or evaluated in the project and a plan to offer a solution.



Part II. Award Information

A. Total Available Funds: Anticipated at about \$4,500,000. The actual amount to be made available shall be at the discretion of the NCPN Governing Board.

B. Funding Uncertainties: NCPN Federal FY 2011 funding is from a ‘no-year’ funding source. Currently, NCPN Cooperative Agreement program funding is only available in FY 2011. If Farm Bill 2008 funding is not available in future years for NCPN activities of those years, the NCPN Governing Board may at its discretion recommend that FY 2011 funding be obligated at lesser than requested amounts and used over longer periods of time.

Additionally, if during FY 2011 it is determined that NCPN funding is not available for obligation by USDA for the fiscal year, USDA is under no obligation to fund any proposals submitted under this RFA.

C. Competitive Process: The NCPN Cooperative Agreement Program conducted under this RFA is a competitive process and the funding of any submitted proposals is at the discretion of USDA in consultation with NCPN’s proposal review panel.

D. Anticipated Number of Awards: Approximately 10 Cooperative Agreements.

Expected Amounts of Individual Awards: Approx. \$15,000 - \$1,250,000

Anticipated Start Date: August 15, 2011.

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E. Period of Performance: 1 Year on average with option to provide a multi-year award subject to annual review and reauthorization.

F. Type of Assistance Instrument: Cooperative Agreement

G. USDA/APHIS Role: USDA/APHIS/PPQ will administer the Cooperative Agreements on behalf of the NCPN Federal Partners. The NCPN Federal Partners are composed of representatives from USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) [formerly the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)], and APHIS and will provide advice to the project administrator, track funding, receive and review progress reports, offer comments and suggestions, and will track project performance. APHIS personnel in addition to its NCPN partners in ARS and NIFA will meet with cooperators as often as necessary to ensure progress in accomplishing the goals of the project, identifying obstacles, and resolving concerns.



Part III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants: Land Grant Universities, Non Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture, State Agricultural Experiment Stations, State Governments and Federal Government Agencies (to the extent that support to Federal clean plant centers is suggested by industry stakeholders) with preference given to institutions or agencies with existing and established facilities and capability to conduct plant pathogen molecular diagnostics, apply therapies, and establish and maintain foundation/nuclear blocks of clean plant material.

Priority shall be given to applicants that work through established NCPN specialty crop governing bodies to prioritize components of their proposals and harmonize their applications with others in their respective networks. Applications must be submitted by authorized representatives of the institution or agency applying for assistance and the applications must be in the format described in section IV.B.

Authorized representatives from institutions or agencies whose projects are considered for funding will be required to complete the application for Federal Assistance, including all associated forms required by USDA, and, if funded, sign a Cooperative Agreement.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching: It is preferred that projects have contributing funds, cost-shared by the applicant or in-kind contributions, including third-party in-kind contributions, or an enumeration of other funds available for program operations in addition to NCPN requested support shall be accorded increased prioritization for NCPN funding.



Part IV. Proposal and Work Plan Submission Process

A. NCPN Specialty Crop Governing Body Coordination Requirement: All applicants for funding under the NCPN Cooperative Agreements program must show evidence that their applications (including project proposals and work plans) have been submitted to an appropriate NCPN specialty crop governing body for networking, prioritization, harmonization, and coordination with other proposals submitted covering the same NCPN specialty crop grouping. Evidence of such coordination is required at least in the form of a letter of support from the appropriate NCPN governing body specific to the applicant's specialty crop focus area. In cases where an applicant is requesting NCPN support for work on specialty crops covered by more than one NCPN specialty crop governing body (specialty crop clean plant network) evidence of coordination and support from all relevant specialty crop clean plant networks must be provided with the application.

B. Electronic and Paper Application Submissions: All applicants must individually submit their respective applications through Grants.gov. An exception is where one or more institutions choose to apply for consideration as a sub-grantee to a principle applicant. In such a case however, work plans and budget submissions traceable down to individual institutions are also strongly encouraged.

All applicants, or sub-grantees if several entities submit work plans under a single application coordinated by a lead applicant, must still complete individual work plans including content similar (or essentially equivalent) to the format provided in this RFA.

In cases where an applicant chooses only to submit an application via Grants.gov, they must still ensure that any consultation and coordination with an NCPN specialty crop governing body has captured their discussions in a letter submitted by the NCPN specialty crop governing body to the address at the end of this announcement, documenting the consultative process and its results.

C. Proof of Application Coordination: At their discretion, NCPN specialty crop governing bodies (Tier 2) may choose to submit all cooperator applications under their review as a single package to the address at the end of this announcement. They may also request that individual applicants directly submit their applications electronically through www.grants.gov or to the address at the end of this announcement.

In situations where the NCPN specialty crop governing body chooses to forward all applications submitted to it for networking, prioritization, harmonization, and coordination, the governing body may provide a single letter documenting the consultative process with all included applications. In situations where the NCPN specialty crop governing body suggests that individual applicants submit their applications directly to the address at the end of this announcement, the NCPN specialty crop governing body must provide the applicant with a letter documenting the consultative process.

In cases affecting applications where more than one NCPN specialty crop governing body (specialty crop clean plant network) is relevant to an application, evidence of coordination and

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support by all relevant specialty crop clean plant networks must be submitted with the application. Such applications may be coordinated and submitted to NCPN by any relevant specialty crop clean plant network with necessary evidence of coordination and support by other such relevant bodies or as otherwise provided for in this RFA.

In cases where a specialty crop does not yet have an NCPN recognized governing body, but where one is being formed, evidence of network formation activities may be submitted by the applicants for NCPN Governing Board consideration.

D. Pre-Proposal Review and Prioritization – A Suggested Model: Based on the experiences of the NCPN Cooperative Agreement FY 2009-2010 process, the NCPN Governing Board makes the following strong recommendation for continuance of an improved proposal review process in this FY 2011 NCPN Cooperative Agreements program.

As a criterion for consideration in the NCPN Cooperative Agreements program, the NCPN Governing Board indicates that pre-proposal review, harmonization, and component prioritization by an existing NCPN specialty crop governing body, especially a specifically designated, industry-centered working group, would receive a high priority for funding consideration. Such a group designated to review pre-proposals should be a working group largely composed of about 50% industry with other affected stakeholders. This serves to ensure industry stakeholders with a strong involvement in the pre-proposal development process. This serves to provide the NCPN Governing Board with a high degree of confidence in the specialty crop governing body pre-proposal decision-making process, including proposal harmonization to help foster an efficient network system.

The specialty crop pre-proposal working group should also be engaged in a process of “prioritization.” The NCPN Governing Board finds this aspect of the pre-proposal stakeholder review process to be extremely useful. This process should not prioritize individual proposals against each other, but rather look at specific aspects of individual pre-proposal content and highlight the important parts of each proposal before the working group, ranking ‘components’ relative to importance and need for the whole of the specialty crop being considered. In the event that funding was insufficient, this process of prioritization will provide the NCPN Governing Board with crucial information “across all applications” as to what the priority ‘components’ were for each of them. The NCPN Governing Board sees this as a truly ‘harmonizing’ process, honoring the submissions of each potential applicant and suggesting which components of each proposal were key consideration priorities.

For proposals including an Education/Outreach component, the NCPN Governing Board sees merit in coordinating this component of the proposal through the NCPN Education/Outreach Working Group to ensure that the request aligns with the general direction of NCPN collectively as manifest through the actions of the working group.

Evidence of compliance with this process should be submitted by specialty crop clean plant governing bodies in support of pre-proposals submitted to them for consideration



Part V. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package: (V.B. (below) “Content and Form of Application Submission” contains the Project Work Plan template which outlines the format applicants should follow when applying. Paper copies of the other required application forms (SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance”, SF-424A, “Budget Information – Non Construction Programs”, SF-424B, “Assurances – Non-construction Programs”, and SF-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities”) can be requested from the following address:

USDA, APHIS, MRPBS, Agreements Services Center
Eileen Berke
4700 River Road, Unit 55, Station 3B06.3
Riverdale, MD 20737

They can also be retrieved from the APHIS website at the following address:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/forms/grants.shtml>.

If an applicant chooses to apply through Grants.gov, the SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL (SF-LLL is required for Federal Assistance greater than \$100,000) can be filled out and submitted online. The Work Plan described in V.B., “Content and Form of Application Submission” should then be submitted as an attachment.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission – Proposals / Work Plans

**National Clean Plant Network (NCPN)
Cooperative Agreement Program**

WORK PLAN FORMAT

Cover Page

Name of Project:

One or Two Sentence Project Description:

Principle Investigator:

Name of Entity:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Office Phone:

Cell Phone:

Fax:

E-mail Address (Principle Investigator):

**Name, Title, and Signature of the Official Authorized by the Institution/Agency to Apply
for Federal Financial Assistance:** _____

Date: _____

Please complete each section explained on the following pages and maintain the numbering format on your application. Section VI, “Application Review Information” provides more details on the information requested and how it will be used to evaluate applications for funding.

Work Plan Length – Excluding the cover page, applicants shall not exceed 15 pages (font 12, single spaced) in Work Plan length. This limitation does not include any Federal application forms.

Appendices – Applicants may submit documents as Appendices in support of their Work Plan in addition to the 15 page Work Plan limitation. However, any submitted Appendices over 10 pages total may be assessed at the discretion of NCPN.

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Work Plan Table of Contents - All applicants must also include a Work Plan “Table of Contents” (also excluded from the 15 page maximum count for Work Plan length.

APHIS Agreement No: *(To be Completed by USDA for Successful Applicants)*
Other Identifying Numbers: *(Any Applicant Desired Program Identification Numbers)*

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2011 WORK PLAN

Name and Location of the Party Applying for Support

Name of Project Being Supported

Provide a brief one or two sentence description of the proposed project for which funding is being sought.

I. Public Purpose – Project Introduction and Program Need:

Provide an overview of the project and information to help others appreciate the value of the project.

II. Cooperative Interest of USDA in Collaborating Jointly with _____ in this Program:

Provide information about why you believe that USDA has an interest in collaborating jointly with the applicant in the proposed project. The response should focus on addressing the mission of APHIS and may also include the missions of ARS and NIFA.

III. Alignment with the USDA and NCPN Strategic Goals and Mission Areas:

Refer to Part I. C. “Alignment with the USDA Strategic Goals and Mission Areas” and Part I D. “Alignment with NCPN Program Components” and indicate all that apply. A brief paragraph explaining the selection(s) is also required.

IV. Stakeholder Participation and Industry Focus

A. Stakeholder Participation:

Provide a listing of the organizations collaboratively involved with the applicant in activities carried out through this proposal and explain their involvement.

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B. Industry Focus:

Indicate the industry or industries being served as a result of the products generated through this project. As applicable, also indicate the commodity, type, and number of deliverables intended for use either by nurseries or growers and the anticipated timeframe for producing and delivering, or otherwise making available, the agreed upon materials and products.

V. Specialty Crop Governing Bodies and Application Harmonization

Indicate the involvement of NCPN-focused specialty crop governing bodies in the process of having the application reviewed for networking, prioritization, harmonization, and coordination with other proposals submitted covering the same NCPN specialty crop grouping.

VI. Project Description

Provide a comprehensive description of the program proposed for funding, including full program operation. This must include purpose, objectives, scope of work, methodology/approach, and expected deliverables. This section should also include the following:

The project description should also indicate all of the “NCPN Program Components” (See Part I. D.) that are contained in the project and explain how the components shall be addressed. This includes specific aspects of NCPN governance, operations, research and methods development, outreach and education, and quality assurance and quality control.

VII. Budget Plan

Provide budget details that reflect the expenditures for the project presented (or that will be presented) on Standard Form 424A and expand on the details either in the form of a descriptive budget narrative or as suggested below:

*Salaries** _____ \$ _____

and Fringe (xx%) _____

** Specify type and number of positions and exact salary and number of hours devoted to NCPN*

*Equipment*** _____

*** Specify the type, number, and cost of each piece of equipment requested*

Supplies _____

Travel (per diem X number of days)=

Airfare X number of trips=

Miscellaneous costs=

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<i>Meeting and Conferences Registration fees X number of conferences</i>	_____
<i>Printing/Publications</i>	_____
<i>Contracts and Other Services</i>	_____
<i>Other Costs</i>	_____
<i>Indirect***</i>	_____
<i>*** Limited to 10% for Universities for Cooperative Agreements</i>	
<i>Total</i>	\$ _____
 <i>APHIS Share</i>	 \$ _____
<i>Cooperator's Share</i>	\$ _____

Matching funds: Indicate any cost-sharing, match contributions, or an enumeration of other funds available for program operations in addition to NCPN requested support here in budget fashion as above.

Note: In order to claim indirect costs a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement must be in place and a copy provided to APHIS at the time of award.

VIII. Milestones/Time Tables and Performance Measures

Define and quantify the major milestones for the project and provide a target date for achieving each milestone. List the specific performance measures that will be used to evaluate the success of the project and how each element will be measured. The performance measures should be 'outcome' based and indicate the quantity and type of deliverables anticipated under this project as well as the impact of producing and providing those deliverables.

IX. Principle Investigator and Other Contact Information (Including APHIS/PPQ):

Institution Name:

Principle Investigator:

Provide the name and all contact information for the primary cooperator contact person(s).

Grants and Agreements Contact:

Provide the name and all contact information for the cooperator agreements/grants/budget contact person(s) needed to facilitate the agreement through the cooperator's process.

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Other Persons Crucial to this Program:

Provide the name and all contact information for other persons crucial to this program needed to facilitate the agreement through the cooperator's process.

USDA, APHIS, PPQ – Program Contacts:

Dr. Robert S. Johnson, Director
USDA, APHIS, PPQ Plant Health Programs
Quarantine Policy, Analysis and Support Staff
Accreditation, Certification, and Networking Services
4700 River Road, Unit 60
Riverdale, MD 20737
Phone: (301) 734-5055
Fax : (301) 734-5269
E-mail: Robert.S.Johnson@aphis.usda.gov

Mr. Erich S. Rudyj, Coordinator - National Clean Plant Network (NCPN)
USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Plant Health Programs (PHP)
Quarantine Policy, Analysis and Support Staff
Accreditation, Certification, and Networking Services
4700 River Road – Unit 60, Room 4A.03.13
Riverdale, MD 20737
Phone: (301) 734-6748
Fax: (301) 734-5269
E-Mail: Erich.S.Rudyj@aphis.usda.gov

Ms. Tammy Kolt, Administrative Support
National Clean Plant Network (NCPN)
USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Plant Health Programs (PHP)
Quarantine Policy, Analysis and Support Staff
Accreditation, Certification, and Networking Services
4700 River Road – Unit 60
Riverdale, MD 20737
Phone: (301) 734-5252
Fax: (301) 734-5269
E-Mail: Tammy.Kolt@aphis.usda.gov

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C. Application Forms

The following forms must be submitted with the “Assessment and Initial Implementation Projects” Work Plan (above). Federal agencies only complete the workplan and budget plan.

- *Application for Federal Assistance: Standard Form (SF) 424*
- *Budget Information: SF 424A*
- *Assurance – Non-Construction Programs: SF 424B*
- *Disclosure of Lobbying Activities : SF-LLL*
- *Current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement if indirect costs are assessed in the budget.*

D. Submission Dates and Times, including Other Relevant Dates:

- **Deadline:** 5:00 pm (US eastern time) June 10, 2011 for submission completion in Grants.gov. If e-mailed, the package must be received by USDA/APHIS by the deadline. If mailed, the package must be postmarked by the deadline.
- **Submission:** Applications should be submitted electronically through Grants.gov or emailed or regular mailed to the address in Section V.G. of this announcement.
- **Evaluation and Selection**
The evaluation and selection of applications will be conducted within 30 days of the application deadline. Following the selection process, all applicants will be notified whether their application will be funded. The evaluation committee reserves the right to suggest modifications to the application and associated budget.
- **Allocation of Funds**
Unless otherwise indicated, funds will be allocated for a 12-month period beginning on the date indicated in the Notice of Award.

E. Intergovernmental Review - IMPORTANT

At the time that applicants apply for NCPN funding support it is highly encouraged that they also initiate this process, if applicable in their State, as satisfactory compliance with the process can take up to 60 days for new projects and 30 days for continuation projects.

For FY 2011, CFDA 10.025 is subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs” in the States or Territories of: American Samoa, Arkansas, California,

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Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Guam, , Iowa (State Agencies only), Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada (State Agencies only), New Hampshire, North Dakota, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Texas, Utah (State Agencies only), Virgin Islands, and West Virginia. Awards will not be made until this process has been completed in the applicable states. Names and addresses of States' Single Point of Contact (SPOC) are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>. For those applicants that have this process in their state, submit your application to the SPOC simultaneously to submitting to APHIS. Failure to meet with this requirement will result in a rejection of your application. A copy of the SPOC waiver or approval letter will be required at the time the award is made.

F. Funding Restrictions

Project funds must be obligated by the recipient within 12 months from the date the funds are made available by APHIS (the date of approval on the Notice of Award) unless otherwise stated in the Notice of Award. Construction is not authorized.

The applicant must submit a copy of its fully executed current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, negotiated by its recognized Federal agency, when indirect costs are assessed in the budget. Non-profit organizations' assessment of indirect costs are limited to not more than 10% of total direct costs or the application of their indirect cost rate agreement, whichever is less.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants can apply to this funding opportunity through Grants.gov. First time Grants.gov users should go to the "Get Registered" tab on the Grants.gov website and carefully read and follow the steps listed in order to apply. Your organization will need to be registered with Central Contractor Registry (CCR). In order to register with the CCR, a requirement for registering with Grants.gov, your organization will need a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) Number. A DUNS number is a unique nine-character identification number provided by the commercial company, Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) at no cost. To investigate if your organization already has a DUNS number or to obtain a DUNS number, contact Dun & Bradstreet at 1-866-705-5711. Also, be sure to complete the Marketing Partner ID (MPIN) and Electronic Business Primary Point of Contact fields during the CCR registration process. These are mandatory fields that are required when submitting grant applications through Grants.gov.

Please note: The DUNS and CCR requirements described above are applicable to all applicants whether you choose to apply through Grants.gov or submit a paper application package.

Applications must be received through Grants.gov or at the address below by close of business on the closing date indicated in Part V. "Application and Submission" Section D. "Submission Dates and Times."



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Part VI. Application Review Information

A. Criteria

1. Summary of Score Sheet: The summary below reflects the weightings that will be used to evaluate each application.

CATEGORY	Points	
	Sub Category	Total Category
<u>Goal Alignment</u>		25
A. Alignment with USDA and NCPN Mission and Goals	25	
<u>Stakeholder Participation and Focus</u>		75
A. List of Stakeholders Participating	25	
B. Industry Focus	50	
<u>Governing Bodies and Harmonization</u>		100
A. Established or Formative Specialty Crop Governing Bodies	50	
B. Harmonization and Prioritization by the Specialty Crop Network	50	
<u>Overall Merit of Project – Scope of Work and Methodology</u>		500
A. Introduction and Summary	25	
B. Purpose and Objectives	100	
C. Scope of Work, Methodology/Approach, and Expected Deliverables	350	
D. Communication Plan	25	
<u>Project Administration</u>		300
A. Budget	100	
B. Cost share, match, or enumeration of other funds available for program	100	
B. Milestones/Time Tables and Performance Measures	100	
Total		1000

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2. Explanation of Evaluation Relative to Information Requirements

The following provides an explanation on how the applications will be evaluated and clarification of information to be provided by the applicant in preparing the application. The explanations reflect what information is to be supplied to receive a higher portion of the points possible for the category and are in the same sequence as the application form for ease of reference.

Goal Alignment (25)

A. Alignment with USDA and NCPN Mission and Goals (25)

Indicated which of the stated missions and goals are addressed by the project and provide a brief sentence or two indicating why. More inclusive, diverse projects will receive higher rating in this area.

Stakeholder Participation and Focus (75)

A. List of Stakeholders Participating (25)

Provide a summary of the stakeholders who will be involved; include only those who will have a significant role in the project. Broad participation of stakeholder groups will receive a higher rating in this area.

B. Industry Focus and Roles (50)

Realistically project the number of plant materials or other deliverables affecting nurseries and growers that will be included in the project. Also, indicate the number of non-industry participants who will have a role in the project. Broad industry participation is important. The applicant should explain the role of each industry affected by applicant activities. The majority of the scoring emphasis in this section pertains to the degree of involvement of various segments of the nurseries and growers and associated industry associations. Applicants should expand upon the roles of each participating industry segment.

Governing Bodies and Harmonization (100)

A. Established or Formative Specialty Crop Governing Bodies (50)

Indicate whether an NCPN-focused specialty crop governing body exists and its ability to coordinate proposals for NCPN consideration.

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B. Application Harmonization and Prioritization by the Specialty Crop Network (50)

Indicate the degree to which the proposal has been coordinated within the applicable NCPN-focused specialty crop governing body and the extent to which it is harmonized within that network with any other clean plant initiatives.

Overall Merit of Project – Scope of Work and Methodology (500)

The merit and value of the project as it relates to the implementation of the NCPN is the most important section when evaluated for consideration. Thoroughly respond to each question/statement as listed in the Application, beginning on page 19 of this announcement.

A. Introduction and Summary (25)

Provide a brief overview of the project, highlighting its significance and how it will enhance the implementation of the National Clean Plant Network.

B. Purpose and Objectives (100)

Clearly explain the objectives of the project.

C. Scope of Work, Methodology/Approach, and Expected Deliverables (350)

Clearly describe the scope of work of the project including a comprehensive description of the methodology/approach to be used and the products or services to be delivered, including amounts and times.

Note that the primary components of the NCPN include: 1) NCPN Governance, 2) Operations, 3) Methods Development, 4) Extension, Outreach, and Education, and 5) Quality Assurance and Quality Control.

NCPN Governance: Support shall be prioritized to those projects that seek to establish and administer (or otherwise operate under existing) specialty crop focused clean plant network governance bodies (including regional entities if appropriate). These bodies are stakeholder driven and must include clean plant centers to conduct diagnostics and therapeutics as well as industry stakeholders and other associated associations and governmental staff. One of the primary purposes of such specialty crop clean plant networks is to harmonize and coordinate individual project funding requests to ensure for maximum, complete coverage of national needs while reducing unnecessary overlap.

NCPN Project Operations: The primary goal of the NCPN is to support and enhance a network of facilities needed to test and provide therapy for high value specialty crop clones and to establish mother/foundation blocks. The highest priority in the NCPN is placed on the provision of such material in agreed to amounts and time, and to make the material available to nurseries for increase and ultimate provision to growers. *Note: This is the highest priority in the NCPN program.*

Methods Development: Projects may be supported to develop or improve methods needed to test and provide therapy for infected plant material proposed

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for entry into the program. Support may also be considered for activities involving the development of standards and guidelines.

Extension, Outreach, and Education: Consideration is given to projects that, in working in collaboration with the NCPN Education/Outreach Working Group, develop aspects of NCPN education, outreach, and education concepts and materials for nurseries and growers. This should include partnerships with and among land-grant and other university-based extension, outreach, and education services and should include interaction with commercial nurseries, industry associations, and growers. The focus should be on ensuring for the successful development of NCPN products and services.

Quality Assurance and Quality Control: Performance benchmarks and timelines are established for product deliverables and a plan is proposed for internal program reviews and quality controls.

D. Communication Plan (25)

The project should include an outreach component that supports communication between the project and nurseries, growers, and other stakeholders. Explain the networking infrastructure (producer organizations, extension, etc.) that will be utilized to achieve the outreach program. The Applicant should identify and describe how they intend to “deliver” the message and materials. Explain how the industry will gain a better understanding of the NCPN as a result of the project and how the project will be harmonized, coordinated, and communicated among stakeholders. Also, explain what sort of feedback shall be solicited and how the feedback will be shared with the NCPN Governing Body to improve future projects and communication efforts.

Project Administration (250)

A. Budget (100)

This section is to more thoroughly explain the budget information presented on the Budget Information Standard Form 424A. Budgets must include only those costs that are allocable and allowable per relevant OMB guidance available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants_circulars.html.

B. Cost share, match, or enumeration of other funds available for program clean plant activities (100)

Applications that indicate an enumeration of other funds available for program clean plant operations in addition to NCPN requested support shall be accorded increased prioritization for NCPN funding. This may include cost sharing or matching as well as other contributions to the applicant for clean plant activities such as revenue from the sales of plant materials and services, collection of fees or royalties, grants or gifts to the applicant with contribute to the NCPN mission, or matches such as the quantifiable commitment of faculty or staff time, and quantifiable development of facilities and land for use in clean plant activities. It is the sense of the NCPN that cooperator self-sufficiency is an important aspect of a healthy network and that program cost-sharing,

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matching, or an indication of other resources being directly applied to clean plant program operations is one good measure of self-sufficiency.

C. Milestones/Time Tables and Performance Measures (100)

Establish and present milestones (key activities) with target dates for accomplishing each. The milestones must correlate to the project's objectives and desired results.

The application must provide specific measurable objectives in the proposal, including initial implementation goals. This information will be a priority in the evaluation of the application. The specific performance measures will be used to evaluate the success of the project. Include how each element will be measured. It is critical for the application to have well defined performance measures.

Note: The duplication of projects with the same objectives should be prevented by the process in which program managers harmonize and coordinate their respective requests through the specialty crop clean plant network governing bodies.

B. Review and Selection Process

USDA/APHIS/PPQ in collaboration with USDA/ARS and USDA/NIFA as represented by the members of the NCPN Core Working Group is responsible for the ultimate approval of projects that will be funded through cooperative agreements. They shall be assisted in their task by the members of the NCPN Governing Board that shall form as the selection panel to participate in the evaluation and selection process of NCPN funding applications. The panel composed wholly of Federal and State employees shall make the primary selection of projects for funding and shall submit their decisions to the NCPN Core Working Group for final ratification. They may seek counsel from subject-matter experts as appropriate. The NCPN Governing Board members are selected based on their knowledge of clean plant, germplasm, and plant health regulatory issues. Individuals on the panel will have no association with any project that is being reviewed. In the event of a real or perceived conflict of interest, a panel member shall recuse themselves as appropriate. USDA/APHIS/PPQ has final funding obligating authority in determining which projects are funding for this initiative.



Part VII. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notice

Applications selected for funding will be notified by email or phone after the selection process is complete (approximately July 1, 2011) followed by the mailing of the notice of award (approximately 10 days after the email notification). The signature of the authorized agent and receipt of the notice of award by APHIS for final signature will initiate the cooperative

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agreement. A letter will be mailed to all other applicants on approximately the same date the selected applicants are first notified.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Access privileges to national databases provided to cooperators by APHIS will be given only to specific individuals specified in the agreements and must not be shared with any other individual, organization, company, or other entity. Animal health data specified under the agreement that are collected under the terms of the agreement are to be provided to APHIS in accordance with the data transfer protocols required by the national databases.

Successful applicants must comply with the requirements contained in the United States Department of Agriculture "Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations", 7 CFR 3015; "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments", 7 CFR 3016; in addition to "Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)", 7 CFR 3017; "Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace", 7 CFR 3021; "New Restrictions on Lobbying," 7 CFR 3018; and Office of Management and Budget regulations governing "Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public", 5 CFR 1320.

C. Reporting

The Project Administrator will provide to the APHIS authorized representative **quarterly** accomplishment reports on program activities outlined in this application. The reports will be used by APHIS to verify compliance with provisions of this **Agreement**. These reports are due **no later than 30 days** after the end of each Federal fiscal quarter except the final report which is due **no later than 90 days** after the **Agreement** expires or terminates.

The Project Administrator will provide to the APHIS authorized representative a properly certified **quarterly** Federal Financial Status Report, SF-425, **no later than 30 days** after the end of each Federal fiscal quarter and a final SF-425 **no later than 90 days** after the **Agreement** expires or terminates. Any requests for an extension of time to submit the SF-425 must be made in writing to APHIS' authorized representative before expiration of the initial 30 or 90 day period allowed for submitting the report. Extensions of time to submit the SF-425 are subject to the discretion of APHIS' authorized representative and, if allowed, shall be provided by the authorized representative in writing.



Part VIII. Agency Contacts

For questions of NCPN programmatic content, please contact:

Mr. Erich S. Rudyj, Coordinator
National Clean Plant Network (NCPN)
USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Plant Health Programs (PHP)
Quarantine Policy, Analysis and Support Staff
Accreditation, Certification, and Networking Services
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For NCPN administrative questions, please contact:

Ms. Tammy Kolt, Administrative Support
National Clean Plant Network
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Accreditation, Certification, and Networking Services
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For Cooperative Agreement application and administrative questions, please contact:

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Phone: 301-734-5432
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USDA APHIS, Agreements Services Center
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Part IX. Other Information

If in FY 2011 the Federal Budget contains funds for additional NCPN Cooperative Agreements, they will follow requirements similar to this Request for Applications as modified or otherwise adjusted. NCPN may request that stakeholders provide feedback regarding this RFA for use in improving any future announcements.

The USDA is not obligated to make any award as a result of this announcement nor to make any changes to future announcements. Only the APHIS Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) can bind the Government to expenditure of funds and this obligation of funds shall only occur in writing by authorized officials and under the approved USDA, APHIS Cooperative Agreement format.

